

**CITY OF LODI
INFORMAL INFORMATIONAL MEETING
"SHIRTSLEEVE" SESSION
CARNEGIE FORUM, 305 WEST PINE STREET
TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 2001**

An Informal Informational Meeting ("Shirtsleeve" Session) of the Lodi City Council was held Tuesday, August 14, 2001 commencing at 7:04 a.m.

A. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Members – Hitchcock, Howard, Land, Pennino and Mayor Nakanishi

Absent: Council Members – None

Also Present: City Manager Flynn, City Attorney Hays and City Clerk Blackston

B. CITY COUNCIL CALENDAR UPDATE

City Clerk Blackston reviewed the weekly calendar (filed).

C. TOPIC(S)

C-1 "Downtown Trip Reduction Program Report"

City Manager Flynn stated that staff had two objectives with the Downtown Trip Reduction Program: 1) to improve the air quality in the Central Valley; and 2) to improve parking in the downtown area.

Public Works Director Prima warned that the Central Valley area is expected to be downgraded to the severe category with regard to air pollution. Implications may involve requirements for additional analysis on highway projects and more constraints on employers.

Paula Fernandez, Traffic Engineer, reported that City staff has been working with the Downtown Lodi Business Partnership to implement parking solutions. In addition, meetings have been held to gather input from merchants and employees. Ms. Fernandez outlined the following concepts, which were derived from these meetings:

1. Partner with downtown businesses and the Council of Governments (COG) to implement programs.
2. Amend the City vehicle take home policy to include allowing non-City employees to utilize City vehicles.
3. Develop a cash incentive program, e.g., offer a cash amount for not using a parking space, and/or provide bus vouchers.
4. Implement an alternative work schedule policy of either a compressed work week (four 10-hour days), or a 9/80 schedule with every other Friday off.
5. Establish a preferential parking program for car pools and institute commuter improvements such as adding more bicycle racks, lockers, bus shelters, park and ride lots outside the core area with a shuttle service downtown; use discarded bicycles, paint them a bright color and allow the public to use them in the downtown area.

Ms. Fernandez also stated that staff would like the City to participate in California Rideshare Week in October.

Council Member Land voiced support for the concept of using bicycles downtown and suggested painting them purple. In addition, he suggested placing bicycle racks near the flag poles at the new theater and developing an express bus route to the downtown area.

Continued August 14, 2001

Council Member Howard expressed support for concept #1. She did not recommend concept #2, due to the associated liability of having multiple riders (both City and private sector employees) in City vehicles. Further, Ms. Howard stated that she did not advocate concept #3, as she felt ride reduction should be voluntary with the least amount of burden to businesses. Concept #4 should be determined on an individual basis accordingly to the specific needs of businesses and their employees. Ms. Howard supported the encouragement of cyclists, and suggested development of park and ride lots with express shuttles to the downtown area.

Mayor Pro Tempore Pennino felt that it may be beneficial to survey the downtown employees to determine their work commute distance and route. He noted that there is still a lot of parking available south of Pine Street. He believed the parking problem would only be an issue for the next five to seven months (i.e. until the downtown parking structure was completed). He did not recommend concepts #2, 3, or 4, but did support concepts #1 and 5.

Mayor Nakanishi agreed that concept #4, which would potentially close City Hall on certain Fridays, would not be advantageous to the citizenry.

Council Member Hitchcock stated that she would support concept #4 only if it resulted in increasing the number of hours the City would be open for business. She expressed support for concepts #1 and 5, and was not in favor of concepts #2 or 3.

Mayor Nakanishi prioritized favorable concepts as #5 and 1.

Kurt Overmeyer, Regional Planner from COG, reported that the first week in October is California Rideshare Week. Incentives are offered to participants. He felt that maintaining a number of bicycles for public use in the downtown area was a good idea and noted that the University of Wisconsin has done so successfully for over 25 years.

Mayor Pro Tempore Pennino mentioned that part of the parking problem downtown is related to the hotel and felt that permits should be issued to hotel residents for the parking lot.

In response, Deputy City Manager Keeter noted that hotel residents cannot legally be prevented from parking on the street; however, Community Development Director Bartlam plans to contact the manager in an effort to ameliorate the situation.

Public Works Director Prima noted that maintaining a supply of bicycles for public use in the downtown area could be costly. He indicated that he would look into funding possibilities from COG, Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds, grants, and private businesses.

D. COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

E. ADJOURNMENT

No action was taken by the City Council. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 a.m.

ATTEST:

Susan J. Blackston
City Clerk

Mayor's & Council Member's Weekly Calendar

WEEK OF AUGUST 14, 2001

Tuesday, August 14, 2001

- 7:00 a.m. Shirtsleeve Session
1. Downtown Trip Reduction Program Report
- 11:00 a.m. Nakanishi, Robert and Michael Mondavi and Woodbridge Winery staff celebrate the 23rd Annual Blessing of the Grapes, Woodbridge Winery.
-

Wednesday, August 15, 2001

- 7:00 p.m. City Council meeting
No Closed Session items (Note: 7:00 p.m.)
7 Presentations
22 Consent Calendar items
One Public Hearing
8 Regular Calendar items
-

Thursday, August 16, 2001

- 12 Noon Nakanishi. Speaking at Rotary Club meeting, Grape Festival ~ Burgundy Hall.
- 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Grand opening and ribbon cutting for Merry Maids, 923 E. Turner Road.
- 6:00 p.m. Nakanishi. Community Meeting at Heritage School (Cafeteria).
-

Friday, August 17, 2001

- 6:00 p.m. Nakanishi, Hitchcock and Land. Grape Festival Presidents Dinner, Jackson Hall.
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Saturday, August 18, 2001

Sunday, August 19, 2001

Monday, August 20, 2001

- Reminder Lodi Adopt-A-Child Annual Golf Tournament.



CITY OF LODI

SHIRTSLEEVE SESSION

AGENDA TITLE: Downtown Trip Reduction Program Report

MEETING DATE: August 14, 2001

PREPARED BY: Public Works Director

RECOMMENDED ACTION: That the City Council review and discuss the proposed Trip Reduction Program Report for the Civic Center and downtown-area employees.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: As part of our work to resolve downtown parking issues, staff has investigated ways to reduce the number of employee vehicles. City staff and the Downtown Lodi Business Partnership (DLBP) have been working together for several months to implement several short-term parking solutions in anticipation of the theater opening. In addition, the City is developing a conceptual plan for a 300-space parking structure at the southwest corner of Church Street and Elm Street. A Trip Reduction Program, along with the City's short-term solutions, will reduce the number of parked vehicles in downtown and improve air quality. Some elements could also reduce electrical energy usage.

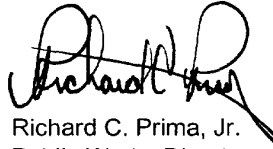
The City Manager, in cooperation with the DLBP, hosted a "round table" discussion with the downtown merchants to discuss ways to reduce the number of parked vehicles downtown. In addition, staff has met with the DLBP on several occasions to discuss alternative parking solutions.

Currently, San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG) has several programs available; a few are described in the attached report. If Council concurs, staff will pursue a Trip Reduction Program including the following concepts described in the attached report:

1. **Partner with Downtown Businesses and SJCOG to implement program**
2. **Amend the City Vehicle Take-Home Policy**
3. **Develop a Cash Incentive Program**
4. **Implement Alternative Work Schedule Policies**
5. **Investigate Preferential Parking Programs and Commuter Improvements**

To initiate the Trip Reduction Program, staff suggests implementing an Alternative Transportation Mode (ATM) Week to encourage employees to use the bus system, car pool, or bicycle to and from work. City staff could arrange to have SJCOG Commute Connection staff available to promote the Program and answer questions.

FUNDING: Not applicable at this time. Once the policies and concepts have been developed for approval, staff will include details on funding.



Richard C. Prima, Jr.
Public Works Director

Prepared by Paula Fernandez, Associate Traffic Engineer

Attachments

RCP/PJF/lm

cc: City Engineer

Human Resource Director

Economic Development Coordinator
Transportation Manager

DLBP Executive Director
Kurt Overmeyer, SJCOG

Steven Mayo, SJCOG
Associate Traffic Engineer

APPROVED: _____

H. Dixon Flynn -- City Manager

Trip Reduction Program Report

Purpose: Reduce the number of parked vehicles in the downtown area and improve air quality.

Concepts:

1. Partner with the Downtown Businesses and SJCOG to Implement the Program

- City staff will partner with the DLBP, downtown businesses, and SJCOG to promote the Commute Connection's Outreach Program. The objective of the program is to encourage ridesharing and the use of other transportation modes including carpooling, vanpooling, bicycling, walking, transit (Grapeline and SMART bus services), and park-and-ride lots. Currently, SJCOG's program involves matching commuters using a database of other interested persons and providing recommended routes to/from home and work. SJCOG staff will present the program to any downtown business.
- In addition, SJCOG offers a Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program that allows commuters to use a taxi or car rental agency for emergencies, if the need arises. An employee enrolled in the program can use the GRH vouchers a maximum of four times per year. SJCOG will work with the City or downtown business to set up the program and provide vouchers for employees.

2. Amend the City Vehicle Take-Home Policy

- To encourage City employees to take home City vehicles, the current Fleet Policies and Procedures may be modified to increase flexibility in the program. Current procedures do not allow City employees to transport anyone other than City employees. The policy could be expanded to allow employees to transport family members or other downtown employees while traveling to and from work. Having staff use City vehicles to and from work will reduce the number of parked vehicles in the downtown area.

3. Develop a Cash Incentive Program

- There are several specific approaches to develop a cash incentive program to encourage alternative transportation modes. Handouts describing several tax incentives and examples are attached. There are federal tax codes that allow tax-advantaged benefits for employees participating in an incentive program. SJCOG staff is available to assist agencies in the implementation of this program and there are consultants who specialize in this area. The following describes two types of incentives:
Parking Cash-Out: Employers offer employees the option of cashing out the value of employer-provided parking. Employees forgo the parking and either receive the taxable cash value for the parking space, or a tax-free transit or vanpool benefit. It is necessary for the Employer to determine the dollar value of employee parking.
Travel Allowances: Employers provide cash incentives to employees to cover alternative mode costs. Employers establish rules that employees must observe to qualify for the benefits. Some businesses have participating employees sign an agreement that describes how frequently they will use alternative modes in order to obtain these benefits.

4. Implement Alternative Work Schedule Policies

- An alternative work schedule, such as a compressed workweek, may be incorporated to reduce the number of parked vehicles downtown. A compressed workweek allows employees to work fewer but longer days, such as four 10-hour days each week (4/40), or 9-hour days with one day off every two weeks (9/80). Additional parking spaces are available on the days employees are off work.

5. Investigate Preferential Parking Programs and Commuter Improvements

- The Preferential Parking Program concept provides conveniently located parking spaces for employees who carpool or vanpool. At the City Hall lot, parking spaces currently located near the back door could be assigned to those participating in the rideshare program. Similarly, the most desirable spaces in the downtown permit parking lots could be assigned to ridesharing participants.
- Downtown and City employees have suggested several commuter improvements to encourage the use of other transportation modes. To promote the Trip Reduction Program, staff will evaluate and implement some of the following suggestions:
 - Provide bus shelters at more bus stops to encourage transit use during inclement weather
 - Provide park-and-ride lots outside the downtown area with shuttle services occurring on a regular basis (i.e., 30-minute intervals)
 - Provide bicycle lockers to encourage avid bicyclists to commute
 - Provide more bicycle racks in the downtown area and encourage the use of the existing downtown bicycle bollards (bollards with rings are for bicycle use)
 - Provide highly visible bicycles in the downtown area. Other cities painted discarded bicycles bright colors and used them as floaters, meaning available to anyone. The bicycles are used as an alternative mode, especially for those employees commuting by transit or ridesharing who may need transportation during the day.



YOUR REGIONAL RIDESHARE AGENCY

INFORMATION

www.commuteconnection.com

Tax Incentives:

By saving employers and employees money, recent changes to the federal tax code have made transportation fringe benefits more appealing than ever. Four tax advantaged transportation benefit options are available:

1. **Benefits in Addition to Salary:** Employers may provide up to \$65 per month to employees who commute to work by transit or vanpool. The employer pays for the benefit and receives the equivalent deduction from business income taxes. Employees receive the benefit completely free of payroll and income taxes, in addition to their current salary. Employers can pay directly for vanpool expenses or purchase transit passes for employees. Alternatively, they can reimburse employees if these passes are not available and the employee provides a receipt.
2. **Benefits Instead of Salary:** Employers may permit their employees to set aside up to \$65 per month of their pre-tax income to pay for transit or vanpools. Employees save on income taxes since that amount is no longer reported as taxable salary. Employers are able to reduce their payroll costs.
3. **Combination:** Employers may share the cost of commuting with their employees. Employers can give their employees part of the cost in addition to salary and allow their employees to set aside part of their pre-tax income to pay the remaining amount. The employer can subsidize any amount, but only \$65 per month is tax deductible. Any amount over that is taxable.
4. **Parking Cash Out:** Employers may offer employees the option of cashing out the value of employer provided parking. Employees forgo the parking and either receive the taxable cash value of the parking space, or a tax free transit or vanpool benefit of up to \$65 per month.

Employers, Employees Using Transit Receive Tax Benefits Under TEA-21

By Jim Paxson

Early this June, new legislation was passed which could make some dramatic changes in how commuters pay for transit. In addition to authorizing highway, highway safety, transit and other surface transportation programs for the next six years, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (known as TEA-21) changes tax laws regard-

ing employee transit benefits.

Previously, tax laws allowed employers to spend up to \$65 per month per employee on transit fees, including public transit and vanpool fees. Many companies participated in this program, but since it was usually seen as a new benefits package, there were some who did not take advantage of it. Under the new law, however, these benefits are now delivered as a pre-tax expense for both employers and employees. The advantages are two-fold: Employers can avoid paying payroll taxes on these benefits while employees can use their transit dollars go further, since the benefits no longer come as taxable income.

For employers, the savings can be dramatic. Assuming a 33 percent combined state and federal income tax, FICA taxes, and unemployment, disability, workers' compensation and retirement costs driven by salary, employers save up to \$78 per year for each employee receiving the transit benefits. As an example, a company with 400 employees participating could save over \$30,000 per year. These same tax advantages benefit employees as well. The maximum benefit of \$780 per year is equivalent to nearly \$1,100 of taxable income. Since employees pay no income tax on the transit or vanpool benefit, they save over \$300 per year. This benefit grows in 2002, when the nontaxable limit for transit and vanpool benefits increases from \$65 to \$100 per month.

Employees may also receive an additional benefit of up to \$175 per month (\$2,100 per year) for parking, including fees at Park and Ride lots. Employers can also offer a parking cash out program where employees may choose to cash out the value of employer-provided parking, forego parking, and receive the taxable cash value of the parking. Check with your company to see if such a program is offered.

One option for implementing a transit benefit package is Commuter Check, administered in the bay area through *RIDES for Bay Area Commuters*. The Commuter Check program provides a way for participants to use a wide variety of transit options. Virtually all of the transit agencies in the Bay Area, including BART, County Connection, SMART, and ACE, accept Commuter Checks. Similarly, vanpool costs may also be paid for with Commuter Checks. Commuter Checks are available in denominations of \$20, \$30, and \$35.

RIDES offers a variety of information packets on implementing Commuter Check programs.



Steven Mayo
Regional Planner

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August 9, 2001

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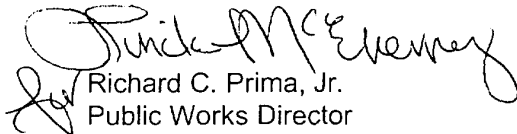
SUBJECT: Downtown Trip Reduction Program Report

Enclosed is a copy of background information on an item on the City Council's informal Shirtsleeve Session agenda for Tuesday, August 14, 2001. The meeting will be held at 7 a.m. in the City Council Chamber, Carnegie Forum, 305 West Pine Street. This item is for Council's review and discussion only since no formal Council action can be taken at Shirtsleeve Sessions.

If you wish to write to the City Council, please address your letter to City Council, City of Lodi, P. O. Box 3006, Lodi, California, 95241-1910. Be sure to allow time for the mail. Or, you may hand-deliver the letter to City Hall, 221 West Pine Street.

If you wish to address the Council at the Shirtsleeve Session, be sure to fill out a speaker's card (available at the Carnegie Forum immediately prior to the start of the meeting) and give it to the City Clerk. If you have any questions about communicating with the Council, please contact Susan Blackston, City Clerk, at 333-6702.

If you have any questions about the item itself, please call Paula Fernandez, Associate Traffic Engineer, at 333-6800, ext. 2667.


Richard C. Prima, Jr.
Public Works Director

RCP/lm

Enclosure

cc: City Clerk